



# City of Santa Clara

## Green Business Newsletter

SPRING 2017

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GREEN BUSINESS?

A Green Business operates efficiently and strengthens its bottom line through its operations.

A Green Business Certification gives businesses a marketing edge to environmentally conscientious customers. The path to achieving a Green Business Certification can also be an excellent team building exercise that boosts company morale.

To learn more about the Green Business certification process, visit [www.greenbusinessca.org](http://www.greenbusinessca.org).

## Bike to Work Day—May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

More than a million Bay Area residents live within five miles of their workplace, making them ideal candidates to commute by bike. There are many reasons to promote bicycle commuting at your business: it's an energizing habit that can improve physical and mental health, save on parking and other costs, relieve traffic and improve air quality.

Bike to Work Day is a great way to start, and there are many resources on safe commuting and cycling benefits. Your business can also host an energizer station along a commute route to provide cyclists snacks and other goodies on their way to and from work. Visit [bikesiliconvalley.org](http://bikesiliconvalley.org) and [bikeleague.org](http://bikeleague.org) for more information, including a poster detailing the benefits of working at a bicycle friendly business.



Environmental Programs  
Public Works Department  
City of Santa Clara  
1700 Walsh Avenue  
Santa Clara, CA 95050



## Green Business Spotlight: Akraya



*"Part of Akraya's very fabric is the promise to our communities and our environment."*

Akraya is a provider of IT, engineering, creative & marketing staffing and consulting services based in Santa Clara.

Akraya is a women and minority-owned company, and has been Green Business certified since 2009. City staff took a tour of their offices to learn more about their efforts, and interviewed Akraya's Marketing Manager, Candice Trebus.

**City Staff:** Why did Akraya get a Green Business Certification?

**Trebus:** Part of Akraya's very fabric is the promise to our communities and our environment. We did it for ourselves, for the planet, and for our customers.

**City Staff:** Do you think obtaining Green Business Certification is easily achievable?

**Trebus:** I do believe it is something that is easily achievable, and I truly believe it is a differentiator. Some

organizations have vendor preference for minority, women-owned, and certified green businesses.

**City Staff:** What advice would you give to businesses considering certification?

**Trebus:** It doesn't take much time, all it really takes is a passionate person. If you don't find that in yourself or your staff, maybe you wait a little bit. But there is really no good reason to wait, and it pays off. People are impressed with the certificate we show off in our collateral. We have all the decals on our doors and people come ask us how we got them.

**City Staff:** What was the main challenge with getting the certification?

**Trebus:** We were challenged by lack of information. For example, people with purchasing power were buying products that did not meet green

business standards. So our biggest challenge was educating employees on the finest of details and letting them know why it is important.

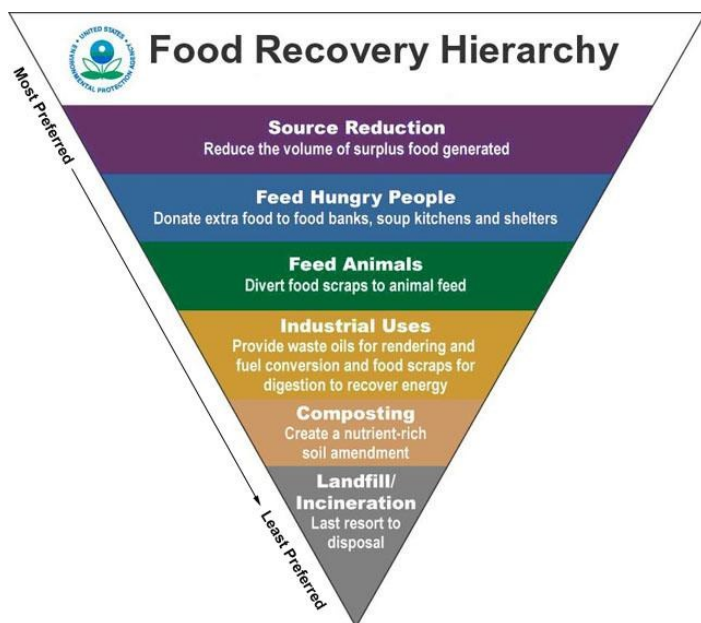
**City Staff:** Is there a specific area you did really well in?

**Trebus:** We nailed the advocacy portion. We have received awards from the County of Santa Clara and we have done a great job at promoting and making sure all of our clients and consultants know about our efforts. We also research our clients and what their sustainability practices look like, that way we align ourselves with our clients.

**City Staff:** Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Trebus:** One of the things that has made our program more effective is that it came from the top down. That helped everyone be on board and makes them feel it's important.

## SAFE Technology



***"Food scraps  
can be turned  
into compost,  
energy or  
animal feed."***

In our previous issue we talked about the new mandatory organics recycling ordinance in the City of Santa Clara, which requires businesses to separate food waste from garbage. Participation in this program aims to reduce food waste, which is vital because 40% of food produced in the US is currently wasted and sent to landfills.

What happens to the food scraps once they are collected? Food scraps can be turned into compost, energy or animal feed. The City of Santa Clara is working in partnership with Mission Trail Waste Systems to process food scraps into animal feed using the SAFE (Sustainable Alternative Feed Enterprises) technology.

SAFE processes collected food scraps using state of the art technology. First, the scraps are taken to a local pre-processing facility where a series of augers, grinders and screens size and separate food scraps from other

materials. Then contaminants are removed and composted when possible, while the remaining material is pasteurized and turned into a mash. Once the pre-processing is completed, the mash is transported to a local SAFE processing facility, where it is turned into a nutrient-rich additive for animal feed.

According to the EPA's food recovery hierarchy (above), using food scraps to feed animals is the third most efficient way to divert food waste from the landfill.

As of January 1, 2017, commercial businesses producing over four (4) cubic yards of organic material are already required to divert organic waste from the landfill. If your business meets this threshold, please contact Mission Trail at 408-727-5365 to set up service. You may also contact City staff to request technical assistance for implementing a food scraps collection program.

## Upcoming Events



**USCC 2017 Compost Conference**  
Westin Bonaventure  
Los Angeles, CA  
January 23, 2017

**GreenBiz**

**GreenBiz17**  
JW Marriott Desert Ridge  
Phoenix, AZ  
February 14–16, 2017



**12th Annual Sustainable Enterprise Conference**  
Sonoma Mountain Village  
Rohnert Park, Ca  
April 7, 2017



**City of Santa Clara**  
The Center of What's Possible

**Arbor/ Earth Day Celebration**  
Central Park, Santa Clara  
April 28, 2017



**Bike To Work Day**  
Various Locations  
May 11, 2017



**Living Future Conference 17**  
The Westin Seattle  
Seattle, WA  
May 17–19, 2017



## Green Business Tips: Handling Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG)



When fats, oils and grease (FOG) go down the drain, they build up in plumbing and can cause damage to pipes. To save on plumbing and grease trap maintenance costs:

- Train employees in proper grease disposal and dry cleanup techniques
- Post informational signs for employees.
- Keep up on maintenance and collection of grease traps for FOG that makes its way down the drain.
- Make sure you have an exhaust hood and that it's working properly.

Submit questions to be answered in the Green Business Tips section to [Environment@SantaClaraCA.gov](mailto:Environment@SantaClaraCA.gov).

## Arbor Day/Earth Day Celebration

The City of Santa Clara is planning its 30th Arbor Day/Earth Day celebration which will be held on April 28, 2017. This event is designed to promote smarter choices for a healthy lifestyle and a healthy planet. The program will include music, activities, performances, and information on how to preserve the earth's natural resources with everyday actions.

This event is open to the general public, and several hundred children from local elementary schools attend this event annually. This year, we are offering sponsorship opportunities to help us expand educational activities and resources for the students and residents who attend. There are a few different options for sponsorship which include advertisement and outreach

opportunities for your business. Your business may also provide in-kind donations (e.g. products, gift certificates, admission tickets, etc.) to be raffled among students.

Sponsoring the Arbor Day/Earth Day celebration is a great way to show your organization is actively involved in the community and supports a sustainable planet for future generations. All charitable contributions are tax-deductible.

If your business is interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact the Environmental Programs Division at (408) 615-3080 or [Environment@SantaClaraCA.gov](mailto:Environment@SantaClaraCA.gov)

For more information about this event, please visit [www.SantaClaraCA.gov/ArborDay](http://www.SantaClaraCA.gov/ArborDay).

### GO PAPERLESS!

To access or subscribe to this newsletter electronically, visit [www.SantaClaraCA.gov/GreenBiz](http://www.SantaClaraCA.gov/GreenBiz).

### CONTACT US

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